A STUDY OF THE NEED FOR CROSS-CULTURAL CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY

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General Studies

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The National Security Strategy of the United States has made it clear that the global war on terror knows no boundaries. In direct support of the National Security Strategy, the National Military Strategy has obligated US troops to combat terrorism wherever the need arises, as expeditiously as possible. This translates into the high probability of United States Armed Forces rapidly deploying to parts of the world they know very little about. If the United States military does not educate its members in matters of culture during peacetime, there may not be time to educate them during times of conflict. Thus, the primary research question of this project is "Does the United States military need to better develop the cross-cultural capabilities of its members?"

To answer the primary research question, a research methodology was followed to ensure the available literature was researched and applied in a relevant and scholarly manner. The collected data was then analyzed and synthesized into conclusions and recommendations. The study concluded that the US military does need to increase efforts to develop the cross-cultural capabilities of its members. Additionally, the study recommends that a Task Force be created to create and implement training, and the Task Force be led by a qualified civilian to avoid unnecessary redundancies or individual service deficiencies.

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not
necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or
any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing
statement.)

ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE NEED FOR CROSS-CULTURAL CAPABILITY
DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY, by
Maj Michael W. Kamorski, 77 pages.

The National Security Strategy of the United States has made it clear that the global war
on terror knows no boundaries. In direct support of the National Security Strategy, the
National Military Strategy has obligated US troops to combat terrorism wherever the
need arises, as expeditiously as possible. This translates into the high probability of US
Armed Forces rapidly deploying to parts of the world they know very little about. If the
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recommends that a task force be created to create and implement training, and the task
force be led by a qualified civilian to avoid unnecessary redundancies or individual
service deficiencies.

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Finally, I would like to thank my family for putting up with me through yet another academic challenge; especially my wonderfully understanding wife, Paula, who not only condones my sometimes irrational behavior, but actually encourages it.

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INTRODUCTION

While catalyzing opportunities to expose world populations to cultures previously

unknown, globalization has also accelerated the need for cross-cultural education and

awareness. In her 19 August 2004 address to the US Institute of Peace, National Security

Advisor Dr. Condoleezza Rice specifically addressed the need for Americans to know

and understand the cultures of other countries. In the words of Dr. Rice:

> Americans need to hear the stories of the people of the Muslim world. We need to
> understand their challenges and their cultures and their hopes; to speak their
> languages and read their literature; to know their cultures in the deepest sense.
> Our interaction must be a conversation, not a monologue. We must reach out and
> explain, but we must also listen. (2004, 2)

The emerging need for cultural education that Dr. Rice emphasized also extends

to the US military. In a Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study on *Transition to and*

from Hostilities, the board recommended that increased cultural education be treated as

seriously as learning combat skills, as both are needed to successfully achieve US

military objectives. The Board concluded the following:

> The knowledge required to be effective in conducting stabilization and
> reconstruction operations is different from the military knowledge required to
> prevail during hostilities, but no less important. We need to treat learning
> knowledge of culture and developing language skills as seriously as we treat
> learning combat skills: both are needed for success in achieving U.S. political and
> military objectives. (2004, xii)

Research Question

The primary research question of this project is: Does the United States military

need to better develop the cross-cultural capabilities of its members? To assist in

answering the primary research questions, three secondary questions and a total of nine

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tertiary questions flow from the primary question. The first secondary question is: What are cross-cultural capabilities? Tertiary questions are: What is the definition of a cross-cultural capability; and what are the various ingredients required to produce a cross-cultural capability? The next secondary question is: Is there a need for cross-cultural capability development in US military members? Tertiary questions that follow are: What were past conflict successes and failures; what are current and future requested needs; and what specific capabilities are desired? The final secondary question is: What are the existing US military cross-cultural capabilities? Tertiary questions are: What are the current training venues, formal and informal; What, if any, are the training inadequacies; What, if any, are the training strong points; and What, if anything, can be improved?

Background

As the US military continues to assume a more diverse role in defending America against an increasingly unpredictable, asymmetric threat, the need to develop the cross-cultural capabilities of its military members has become a critical necessity. The time honored Cold War template of a linear battlefield against a known enemy simply does not exist today. The past fifteen years have seen conflicts erupt in parts of the world few Americans even knew existed prior to American troops being deployed to fight for the freedom of these previously unknown places and people. Places like Kuwait, Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Panama, Afghanistan, Sudan, Kosovo, and Serbia all contain cultures that are vastly different than what American soldiers are accustomed to. Nevertheless, American troops were deployed to the middle of these crises with little, if any, cross-cultural awareness preparation. Additionally, many times the need for global intervention is due to a clash of cultures, which adds yet another dimension to the culture

challenge and results in a more complex, dangerous operating environment. However, the challenge of American Armed forces operating in foreign cultures is not unique to the past twenty years.

Virtually every conflict American soldiers have served in, whether on American or foreign soil, has presented a unique cultural challenge. Armed forces that fought the American Revolution, the Indian Wars, and the Civil War had the same need for cross-cultural awareness as those who fought in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. A lack of US military cross-cultural capabilities directly contributed to shortfalls in these past conflicts and will continue to plague military operations until the problem is worked through to an acceptable solution. Unfortunately, the importance of developing the cross-cultural capabilities of US service members has not been recognized until recently, and so far the fledgling efforts to get soldiers the necessary training have fallen terribly short.

The manner in which people interact with cultures different from their own is both fascinating and complex. Of particular interest for this study is the manner in which Americans interact with indigenous populations in foreign lands. Upon observation of Americans abroad, one could argue that Americans expect others to accept them simply because they are American, yet as Americans they exhibit little interest in accepting the diversity of other cultures. Perhaps this is normal behavior from the population base of the world's last remaining super power. However, what happens when cultures clash and the American soldier who only knows American culture finds himself armed with an automatic weapon in a country where he does not understand why people are behaving in a certain way, and their behavior is contrary to everything he holds true? Worse yet, those

people who are so different than him just killed his buddy. Suddenly the stage is set for an incident like the My Lai disaster of Vietnam, where American soldiers killed an estimated 400 Vietnamese old men, women, and children in the Son My Village. The ensuing investigation attributed the My Lai disaster, in part, to the diverse traits, prejudices and attitudes of the American soldiers and their corresponding tendency to categorize all Vietnamese as the enemy. The topic of cross-cultural awareness and the increasing need for soldiers who are capable of operating in foreign cultures is relevant to today's military operations and a subject worthy of further scholarly study.

Assumptions

This study assumes the United States military will continue deploying troops to combat zones around the world.

Key Terms Defined

The following key terms appear throughout this paper and are listed below with their corresponding definitions:

Cross-Culture: Cross-culture is defined as dealing with or offering comparison between two or more different cultures or cultural areas.

Cross-Cultural Capability: Capable of responding appropriately to encounters with other cultures, whether those cultures are nationality-based, religion-based, gender-based, socio-economically based, or based in any other of the multiple areas of human existence which meld understandings, beliefs, values, and behaviors, it is necessary to acquire knowledge, understanding, awareness, and a willingness, or even a will, to reflect upon one's own position in relation to the other.

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Culture: Culture is defined as the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. Further, culture is the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group or the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes a company or corporation.

Soldier: A person in military service; especially an enlisted man or woman. Note: For purposes of this study, unless specifically stated otherwise, the term soldier will be used to define all members of the United States military, including members of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard.

Limitations and Delimitations

A potential limitation of this study is the difficulty involved with objectively attaching past successes and failures to the abstract field of culture with any type of certainty. To compensate for this potential problem, whenever possible the research will seek to attach stated successes and failures to documented evidence in an attempt to objectify the data. For example, in the My Lai incident cited earlier in this chapter, a report of investigation was used to back the stated findings.

Significance of the Study

The importance of this topic lies in the increasing need for United States troops to become cross-culturally educated. The National Security Strategy of the United States has made it clear that the global war on terror knows no boundaries. In direct support of the National Security Strategy, the National Military Strategy has obligated US troops to combat terrorism wherever the need arises, as expeditiously as possible. This translates

into the high probability of United States Armed Forces rapidly deploying to parts of the world they know very little about. If the United States military does not educate its members in matters of culture during peacetime, there may not be time to educate them during times of conflict. The time to study this problem is now.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Although the subject of cross-cultural capabilities is a relatively new topic of study, the available literature surrounding the subject proved as varied as it is vast. The literature review for this study was divided into three main sections organized around the three corresponding secondary research questions of this thesis. First, the review examines what the term cross-cultural capability means and perhaps more importantly, what it does not mean. Additionally, this section includes the ingredients necessary to produce a cross-cultural capability and how cultural capabilities differ from cultural sensitivities and insensitivities. Next, section two of the literature review explores cross-cultural capabilities in the context of military service, specifically within the United States military. This section of the review looks at past military successes and failures while focusing on how elements of culture contributed to the actions and inactions of military members. Only a sampling of US military conflicts will be reviewed in order to stay within the scope and scale of this paper. This section closes by looking for requested or desired needs for United States military members to be better equipped for cross-cultural challenges. Finally, section three of the review will concentrate on existing military cross-cultural capabilities and what the current training venues consist of. To begin, this literature review will focus on researching the first secondary question of this study, which is: What are cross-cultural capabilities?

The concept of cross-cultural capability is a relatively new area of study that began to gain momentum in the late 1990s and has grown at a rapid pace--perhaps too rapidly. A growing list of terminology surrounding the field of cross-cultural studies has created some confusion by assigning a variety of different names to areas meaning essentially the same thing. According to Killick, this list now includes: cross-cultural capability, cross-cultural skills, cross-cultural competence, cross-cultural awareness, inter-cultural studies, intercultural communication, intercultural effectiveness, intercultural awareness, and intercultural communicative competence. For the purposes of this study, only one term will be used--cross-cultural capability (2005, 2).

The term cross-cultural capability applies to human behavior on multiple dimensions. In addition to addressing how individuals act and react to foreign cultures, it also includes how well individuals understand and accept their own culture. Killick defines cross-cultural capability as follows:

> In order to be capable of responding appropriately to encounters with other cultures, whether those cultures are nationality-based, religion-based, gender-based, socio-economically based, or based in any other of the multiple areas of human existence which meld our understandings, beliefs, values, and behaviours, it is necessary to acquire knowledge, understanding, awareness, and a willingness, or even a will, to reflect upon one's own position in relation to the other. (1999, 3)

Killick's above definition is very comprehensive and incorporates the many dimensions that comprise the cross-cultural domain. Of particular interest is his reference to responding appropriately to encounters with other cultures, not just individuals of other cultures. The ability to effectively operate within a foreign culture transcends the singular act of interacting with the indigenous peoples. A true cross-culturally capable individual understands the breadth of cultural activity taking place at any given time and is capable

of processing that activity into appropriate responses. Killick also implies that individuals must posses a thorough understanding of their own beliefs in order to effectively operate within foreign cultures. This critical element of knowing oneself is an often overlooked element of learning how to function outside a known cultural comfort zone. And, according to Jordan "capability in one's own culture is a necessary starting point for developing cross-cultural capability" (1998, 2).

Colonel Maxie McFarland, US Army, Retired, also believes that knowing oneself is a foundational necessity to successfully operating within a foreign culture. In her article "Military Cultural Education," McFarland states, "Culturally literate soldiers understand and appreciate their own beliefs, behaviors, values, and norms but they are also aware of how their perspectives might affect other cultures' views." The Colonel goes on to state, "Achieving self-awareness of our own cultural assumptions enables us to use this understanding in relations with others" (2005, 2).

Once the foundation of knowing one's own culture has been laid, the focus of developing cross-cultural capabilities moves forward to the next dimension, which is applying that knowledge of "home" culture to broker the understanding of other cultures. With the staggering number of different world cultures that exist today it would be unrealistic to expect any one person to be familiar with then all. However, a general understanding of primary differences that exist between American and other cultures is a useful template to use when comparing cultures on global scale. A good example of this type of comparison is shown in table 1 (Gardenswartz 1998, 164).

Table 1. Comparing Cultural Norms and Values		
Aspects of Culture	Mainstream American Culture	Other Cultures
Sense of self and space	Informal, handshake	Formal hugs, bows, handshakes
Communication and language	Explicit, direct communication; emphasis on content, meaning found in words	Implicit, indirect communication; emphasis on context, meaning found around words
Dress and appearance	Dress for success ideal, wide range in accepted dress	Dress seen as a sign of position, wealth, and prestige; religious rules
Food and eating habits	Eating as a necessity, fast food	Dining as a social experience, religious rules
Time and time consciousness	Liner and exact time consciousness, value on promptness, time equals money	Elastic and relative time consciousness, time spent on enjoyment of relationships
Relationships, family, friends	Focus on nuclear family, responsibility for self, value on youth, age seen as handicap	Focus on extended family, loyalty, and responsibility to family, age given status, and respect
Values and norms	Individual orientation, independence, preference for direct confrontation of conflict	Group orientation, conformity, preference for harmony
Beliefs and attitudes	Egalitarian, challenging of authority, individuals control their destiny, gender equality	Hierarchical, respect for authority and social order, individuals accept their destiny, different roles for men and women
Mental processes and learning style	Linear, logical, sequential problem-solving focus	Lateral, holistic, simultaneous, accepting of life's difficulties
Work habits and practices	Emphasis on task, reward based on individual achievement, work has intrinsic value	Emphasis on relationships, rewards based on seniority, relationships, work is a necessity of life

Source: Gardenswartz and Rowe, *Managing Diversity* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 164

Table 1 is a good illustration of the differences, some of which are polar opposites, which exist between what Americans and other cultures view as "normal." Additionally, many of the differences listed that apply to individual behavior can also be applied in the context of organizational behavior.

Organizations, just like people, have accepted norms and values that constitute the culture of that organization. Therefore organizations must be capable of identifying their cultural norms in order to better understand and operate effectively within external cultures. This concept of organizational cross-cultural capability becomes increasingly more important as globalization and modern warfare continue to connect diverse cultures from all corners of civilization. In his article "Culture…A Neglected Aspect of War," Major B. C. Linberg, USMC, argues that the post Cold-War era has produced an operating environment where wars are being waged inside of nations rather than between nations, and many of these wars are the result of cultural differences and disputes. He goes on to argue that American military strategists consistently fail to plan for the relevancy of culture at all levels of war; strategic, operational, and tactical (1996, 1-5). Developing the cross-cultural capabilities of individuals is only one variable of the bigger equation, which is constructing an architecture that develops capabilities across the full-spectrum of warfare.

In summary, this first section of the literature review explored research question one: What are cross-cultural capabilities? The research showed that cross-cultural capabilities begin with understanding the beliefs, values, and behaviors of one's own culture. This understanding is then applied to a gained knowledge of foreign cultures in an effort to behave appropriately within that culture. Finally, the concept of cross-cultural capabilities can be applied to organizational as well as individual behavior. Moving on to secondary question two, this review will examine the question: Is there a need for cross-cultural capability development in the US military?

This section of the review will begin by exploring past US military successes and failures that can be attributed, at least in part, to a cross-cultural capability deficiency or proficiency. Applying a chronological approach, this review will start with cultural implications dating back to the Indian Wars and work forward to present day conflicts. We will begin by traveling back to 1836 and the signing of the Treaty of Echota.

From the Presidential pen that signed it, to the Militiaman's bayonet that enforced it, the signing of the Treaty of Echota on 23 May 1836 demonstrated a pervasive clash of cultures across all levels of government and society. The treaty proclaimed that the Cherokee Nation, currently living east of the Mississippi River, had two years to cross the Mississippi River and begin living in the new government assigned Indian Territory area. Although originally signed by President Andrew Jackson, the treaty's two year deadline expired after Jackson had left office. Therefore the conditions of the treaty were enforced by sitting President Martin Van Buren, who in turn ordered the "removal" to begin. In what came to be known as the "The Trail of Tears," some 18,000 Cherokee men, women, and children were forced by the Militia to abandon their homes and travel 800 miles under the cruelest of conditions by steamboat, railcar, and finally by foot. Estimates place the total number of deaths somewhere between 4,000 to 8,000. According to one Georgia volunteer who later fought for the Confederate Army, "I fought through the Civil War and have seen men shot to pieces and slaughtered by thousands, but the Cherokee removal was the cruelest I ever saw" (Remini 2001, 18).

The Treaty of Echota illustrates cross-cultural failures from the President to the citizen soldier. The highest levels of government forced a highly protested and

contentious treaty upon the disenfranchised Cherokee Nation, and the Militia responded with abject cruelty toward a culture of people who society had decided it was appropriate to mistreat. The US military also showed a lack of culture understanding when negotiating with the Nez Perce in 1877.

By the time the US government entered talks with the Nez Perce in 1877, a growing legacy of unfulfilled promises and broken treaties had left the Indians cautiously suspicious of the US Army. Accordingly, Nez Perce leaders became more deeply entrenched in their cultural beliefs and increasingly resistant to the demands of the white man. In November of 1876, the commission at Lapwai was convened to address relations between the US government and the non-treaty Nez Perce. The most experienced members of the US delegation were General Howard, US Indian Agent Monteith, and Major Wood, all of whom had previous experience in dealing with the Nez Perce. However, the delegation failed to draw upon their combined knowledge of Indian affairs and defaulted to what they knew best, which was how to establish a treaty that favors the US government regardless of the Indian position (Wilson 2004, 86). The delegation's biggest cultural blunder was failing to negotiate with the person recognized by the Nez Perce as their Chief.

When the sitting Nez Perce Chief, Chief Lawyer, died, the US government endorsed Chief Rueben to become the new Nez Perce Chief. The government liked Rueben's qualities of being mild-mannered and docile. However, the Nez Perce culture demanded that chiefs be selected based on their warrior qualifications and deeds. Ironically, the same traits that made Rueben attractive to the US government disqualified him within the Nez Perce culture to be their chief. Accordingly, the Nez Perce chose

three tribal leaders who had proven themselves as warriors to represent them--Looking

Glass, White Bird, and Toolhoolhoolzote. These three men were chosen because of their

proven bravery and strong medicine. Unfortunately, the US delegation failed to recognize

any of them when attempting to negotiate with the Nez Perce, and elected instead to meet

with the US government's choice, Chief Reuben. To make matters worse, General

Howard displayed open disdain for Toolhoolhoolzote, publicly insulting and eventually

jailing the well respected Nez Perce Chief. General Howard's misuse of the Nez Perce

chain-of-command illustrates a fundamental, cultural misunderstanding of negotiating

with the Nez Perce. Howard's actions coupled with his delegation's lack of cultural

understanding led to the failure of treaty negotiations and the genesis of a costly war

between the US government and the Nez Perce nation (Wilson 2004, 87). Another

example of cultural clashes involving the US military was the cultural conditioning and

societal support of the American serviceman in World War I.

By the time the United States entered Word War I in 1917, the American public,

which due to the newly passed *Selective Service Act* also represented a growing number

of American soldiers, had been subjected to an expertly designed anti-German

propaganda campaign. Newspaper headlines told stories of the war in Europe that cast the

German soldier in an extremely negative light. Newly drafted servicemen entering the

armed forces under the 1917 *Selective Service Act* had been exposed to this

comprehensive propaganda campaign, which planted the initial seeds of cultural bias that

for some would later bloom into a deeply rooted hatred of the German people. The new

American conscripts arrived at their military training stations fully fueled by one of the

greatest propaganda machines ever known. According to Robert Wells in his paper titled

Mobilizing Public Support for War: An Analysis of American Propaganda During World War I, the United States government has only twice during the twentieth century created and mobilized formal agencies to generate support for war. The Committee on Public Information was the agency tasked with gaining public support for World War I. The official propaganda generated by The Committee on Public Information was unprecedented in both the scale of activity and the scope of their campaign, which often reached foreign audiences. In his paper Wells concluded, "The propaganda effort of World War I was not just about a governmental campaign to organize the public to support the war. It provided a setting or environment in which there would be domestic winners and losers. One sees in the complex machinations of World War I propaganda powerful domestic forces operating to promote a cultural hegemony over American society" (2002, 7). This cultural hegemony also impacted American servicemen who went to war hearing songs of glory and victory, which while fueling the propaganda machine that was demonizing the Germans, was also romanticizing the American war effort. For example, the lyrics of the song "Over There", written by George Cohan in 1917 while reading the daily newspaper headlines, reflect the romance and enthusiasm Americans initially felt toward a war that would ultimately produce 364,800 American casualties (Defonzo 2006, 7).

Over There

Johnnie, get your gun,
Get your gun, get your gun,
Take it on the run,
On the run, on the run.
Hear them calling, you and me,
Every son of liberty.
Hurry right away,
No delay, no delay,
Make your daddy glad
To have had such a lad.
Tell your sweetheart not pine,
To be proud her boy's in line.

(chorus)

Johnnie, get your gun,
Get your gun, get your gun,
Johnnie show the Hun
Who's a son of a gun.
Hoist the flag and let her fly,
Yankee Doodle do or die.
Pack your little kit,
Show your grit, do your bit.
Yankee Doodle fill the ranks,
From the towns and the tanks.
Make your mother proud of you,
And the old Red, White and Blue.

(chorus - twice)

CHORUS
Over there, over there,
Send the word, send the word over there--
That the Yanks are coming,
The Yanks are coming,
The drums rum-tumming
Ev'rywhere.
So prepare, say a pray'r,
Send the word, send the word to beware.
We'll be over, we're coming over,
And we won't come back till it's over
Over there.

Figure 1. "Over There"

Source: Michael Roden, *Over There, the Story of America's Most Popular WW1 Song*; available from http://www.aftermathww1.com/overthere.asp; Internet; accessed on 9 December 2005.

These lyrics illustrate two critical points within the context of cultural differences (Roden 2005, 2). First, viewing the war through the American prism obligates "Johnnie" to go kill the "Hun" not to stop an invading war machine, but to make his mother, father, sweetheart, and country proud of him. Second, it sends a clear message that all will be fine once the Americans arrive. Meanwhile, in contrast to the American soldier fighting

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on foreign soil to make his family and country proud, soldiers indigenous to the European battlefields were fighting for the very survival of their families, cultures, and countries. Cultural differences and misunderstanding would continue to challenge the US military following the World Wars, and would be the source of problems that ultimately sent US officers home from the Korean theater.

The Korean War introduced a variety of cultural challenges for US forces. The cultural dimension of the Korean conflict was especially challenging due to the almost immediate involvement of the United Nations. When North Korea invaded the Republic of Korea on 25 June 1950, one month later, on 27 June, the United Nations Security Council resolved to ask member states for military aid (Cooling 1983, 27). Therefore, American troops would be working together with a variety of other nations from the very beginning of the conflict. The leader of the American forces, General of the Army, Douglas MacArthur, was very experienced and proficient working within the Asian culture and displayed a fluent charisma in dealing with the combined force leaders. However, General MacArthur had grown up in the Philippines and spent a number of years working as a military leader in the Asian theater. Unfortunately, the same was not true for the average American soldier and officer who worked for General MacArthur. Most troops arrived with little, if any, understanding of the Asian culture or the cultures of the other United Nations force they would be working with. An early example of cultural misunderstanding involved a Philippine Battalion Combat Team assigned to a US Division. MacArthur's Headquarters had worked out the administrative pieces necessary for logistics and standardization, but problems began below the level of MacArthur negotiations. The US authorities at division level insisted that the Filipino

troops receive an additional thirteen weeks of training before entering combat operations. The Americans insisted this was necessary to get the Filipino soldiers to the American standard of readiness. However, most of the Filipino battalion were veterans from World War II and had participated in multiple campaigns following the war. The US division leaders had simply assumed the troops were untrained and inexperienced.

Another challenge was the 5,000-man Turkish Brigade. The largest challenge proved to be the language barrier, which due to a critical shortage of interpreters, was never really resolved. However, smaller issues that could have been avoided through preparation and cultural understanding continued to crop up during combined operations. Issues such as US rations being provided to Turkish troops that included pork products proved to aggravate relations that were tenuous to begin with (Cooling 1983, 30). When perceived cultural insensitivities such as this are coupled with the fact the Turks were deeply rooted in their cultural beliefs and resistant to any advice or training, suddenly simple misunderstandings that might otherwise be considered trivial become major challenges to unit effectiveness. Additionally, unit effectiveness suffers even more when misunderstanding turns into conflict, as was the case with the Ethiopian unit.

The Ethiopian soldiers arrived to the theater very unprepared to actively participate in combined operations. The consensus among the United Nations staff observers was the Ethiopians lacked the aptitude to operate sophisticated weapons and communications systems. They were also culturally sensitive to matters regarding religion and race to the point that American administrators concluded they were impinging on US standards. For example, the Ethiopian commander insisted that his country's religious customs prohibited autopsies be performed on any of his dead

soldiers. Also, by American standards, the Ethiopian hygiene standards were well below those of American culture, resulting in multiple personality conflicts between officers and open displays of intolerance and arrogance. Ultimately, several officers were sent home due to their inability to adjust to the different cultural dimensions of their operating environment. Cultural unpreparedness and intolerance would continue to accompany the US military into foreign lands, but future conflicts would also produce some cross-cultural success stories, such as the US actions in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

At the time of the Vietnam War, the American military presence in Vietnam was unique to any other military presence in US history. It was no secret to the Vietnamese people that their new government was a product of US policy and assistance. Accordingly, any American presence in Vietnam, to include military members in theater, was critically important to the legitimacy and acceptance of the government system. Acting in direct support of the newly established government, Senior US commanders ordered the establishment of Civil Action Teams in an attempt to display good will to the Vietnamese people. In the 4th Infantry Division, the Good Neighbor Program was created in support of the Civil Action Team initiative (Kirkland 2000, 549).

Initially, commanders were not pleased with their new civic action mission. They were not afforded any additional equipment or personnel, and the mission appeared to be more dangerous than conventional combat missions where the enemy was simply engaged when contact was made. The civic action mission involved actual interaction with the indigenous people within their small villages and hamlets. Additionally, Army personnel had not been trained in this type of operation, and therefore resorted to what they knew; find a way to capture or kill the enemy. Accordingly, the initial interactions

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with civilians were strictly quid pro quo; "tell us where the Viet-Cong are and we'll help your village by providing medical supplies, food, schools and so on." These initial efforts were not received well by the villagers and accordingly little actionable intelligence resulted from this approach.

Late 1967 saw personnel changes on the civic action team staff that resulted in policy changes which eliminated the quid pro quo approach to village assistance. The new staff instituted plans to provide assistance to villages without asking for anything from the villagers in return. This seemingly small adjustment in policy proved to be a significant step toward developing trust among the villagers and building intercultural understanding among the soldiers involved in the mission (Kirkland 2000, 550). Further, although commanders were initially reluctant to take on the new civic mission, some of the brightest young officers, noncommissioned officers, and soldiers were actively seeking duty on civic action teams and doing outstanding work once assigned to a team. Unfortunately, cultural ignorance at higher levels would ultimately derail the gains made by individuals serving on civic action teams in the Highlands.

The American civic action teams were ultimately a failure for three reasons, all of which were at the strategic level of planning. First, the civic action teams were formed to cast the government of Vietnam in a favorable light to the Vietnamese people. However, the majority of US soldier interaction was with the Montagnard peoples of the Central Highlands, who for centuries have had hostile relations with the Vietnamese due to ethnic and cultural differences. By forging relations with the Montagnards and assisting their villages, the civic action teams unwittingly intensified the animosity felt toward the US by the Vietnamese.

Second, the actions taken and promises made by the civic action teams were ultimately short-lived. According to Kirtland, "The American national and military cultures did not place a high value on long-term intercultural relations" (1983, 557). The US Army pulled its troops from the Central highlands shortly after the Tet Offensive and by 1970 the Fourth Infantry Division was pulled from the area entirely, leaving the Montagnards to fend for themselves. By 1972 the former base camp of the 4th Infantry Division was controlled by the Government of Vietnam, and subsequently converted into a concentration camp for the Montagnards.

The final failure turned out to be the legacy created by gaining the trust of the Montagnard villagers and then abandoning them in the midst of crisis. In the final analysis, the US created a serious problem by not understanding the cultural complexities that were underpinning the very society they were attempting to manipulate and exploit. Unfortunately, problems arising from cultural ignorance continue to challenge the US military in present day operations.

Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom have amplified the importance of understanding culture when conducting military operations in foreign areas. Although the final chapters of these conflicts are yet to be recorded in history, there is already a considerable amount of empirical data regarding incidents of cultural significance involving members of the US military. One widely publicized incident involved the burning of dead Afghan fighters by US soldiers.

According to the ranking US commander at the scene of the incident, he decided it was best to burn the two dead bodies for hygienic reasons, stating that the bodies had not been retrieved by local citizens following the engagement that had killed the fighters

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twenty-four hours earlier. Unfortunately, the US soldiers involved were unaware of the fact that Islamic culture forbids cremation. To further complicate matters, as the bodies were burning ,a US psychological operations team broadcast information regarding the burning to local villages and mountain areas where they suspected enemy forces were covertly operating. In response to the incident, the US Army launched an investigation to determine if any Laws of War were violated. While the investigation team concluded no laws were violated, they also determined "The soldiers did not have a thorough understanding of the local Afghan traditions with respect to burial." They also acknowledged the burning was wrong and ordered training on Afghan sensitivities for all troops in the command (Rhem 2005, 4). Also, four of the soldiers involved received reprimands for their involvement. Cultural incidents have also been a problem for US forces in the Iraqi area of operations.

Much of what the US military is doing in the later stages of Iraqi Freedom requires soldiers to interact directly with the Iraqi people. If done correctly, civil-military operations can foster favorable public opinion and gain trust that is otherwise unattainable through a standoff military presence. However, if not conducted properly previously welcoming civilians can turn hostile, and indifferent populations can transform into insurgents (Skelton 2004, 12). And it may not take much, by American standards that is, to turn a scared Iraqi husband and father into a revenge seeking insurgent because of a cultural mistake committed by an untrained US soldier.

For example, US troops are trained to force a subject's head to the ground during an arrest. They are also trained to take control of a situation by being forceful, to include speaking authoritatively in a loud voice and not allowing individuals at the scene of an

incident to speak once they have been told to be quiet. However, these actions, especially in combination, are a severe act of disrespect to an Iraqi, especially to a male within his home. In the documentary video Gunner Palace, there are a number of scenes where US soldiers are detaining and arresting Iraqi men (Epperlein 2004, 1). Some of these arrests include forcibly removing the men from their homes with their families looking on in total disbelief. When this video was showed at the Army Command and General Staff College, an international officer from the Middle East, while watching with great interest, commented "those soldiers are making insurgents." Within the tribal culture, an Arab man would rather be killed than dishonored. By dishonoring Iraqi men, especially with their families looking on, the only way those men can regain their honor is to join the forces who fighting the men who dishonored them (Varhola 2004, 4).

To close this section of reviewing secondary question number two, the research turns to what the stated current and future needs of cross-cultural capabilities are, and what specific capabilities are desired.

The need for developing cross-cultural capabilities in the US military has been apparent to some soldiers, scholars, and students for decades. Edward Stewart, World War II veteran and PhD, wrote in February of 1965 about the need for cultural proficiency when deploying overseas. According to Dr. Stewart, one must understand his own cultural patterns before attempting to understand those of the host country (1965, 4). Many problems of interacting in foreign cultures stem from incongruities between the foreign culture and the American culture. When an American is confused about an action or situation being experienced in a foreign land, the natural reaction is to compare the situation to an American experience. Using the American cultural standard as a baseline

for comparison, often times the actions of the foreign culture being compared is completely opposite or dramatically different than what the American perception of "normal" would be. Therefore, it is very likely that the American will conclude the actions of the other culture are wrong, immoral, unethical, offensive, unhealthy, and dirty. Hence, it is imperative that any training in understanding foreign cultures begins first with understanding what the baseline American culture is and why certain fundamental beliefs are formed and held. These thoughts of over forty years ago ring as true in today's operating environment as they did in the past.

According to cultural anthropologist Montgomery McFate, "Our ethnocentrism, biased assumptions and mirror-imagining have had negative outcomes during the North Vietnamese offensives of 1968 and 1975, the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989), India's nuclear tests (1998), the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (1990) and the Shi'ite transformation of Iran" (2005, 43). McFate argues that historically the Department of Defense has not placed any priority on training its members to be capable of effectively operating within foreign cultures. However, the ongoing US involvement in operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom is proving once and for all the critical need for soldiers to understand culture in order to operate in foreign lands and societies. McFate cites a returning commander from the Third Infantry Division as stating, "I had perfect situational awareness. What I lacked was cultural awareness. I knew where every enemy tank was dug in on the outskirts of Tallil. Only problem was, my soldiers had to fight fanatics charging on foot or in pickups firing AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenades. Great technical intelligence, wrong enemy (2005, 43)." Statements such as this not only validate the need for cross-cultural capabilities, they also begin to illustrate how the need

for these capabilities is not limited to the individual soldier. In the case of this commander, his unit needed intelligence that identified the immediate local threat to his troops. What he received was intelligence on what the collectors assumed was the immediate threat using their established baseline of red force behaviors--a symmetrical battlefield where major combat operations between friendly and enemy forces will occur; therefore the intelligence needs include the location of enemy armor positions. In reality, this commander and the members of the intelligence staff were lacking the cultural understanding necessary to effectively predict the behaviors of the enemy forces they were facing.

According to McFate, the problem of cultural unawareness is so pervasive throughout the Department of Defense that a Federal initiative is needed to correct the growing inadequacies that currently exist. This initiative needs to incorporate social and cultural knowledge of adversaries into all phases of training and operations. It is not enough to receive a broad brush training session on the eve of deployment. Cultural training needs to be a comprehensive element of training and education in addition to becoming an integral component of full-spectrum, lethal, and nonlethal operations. Just how important is this training and education? McFate considers the knowledge of an adversaries' culture a national security priority.

The military need for cross-cultural capabilities does not lie exclusively with the soldiers on the ground interacting with the indigenous peoples of foreign lands. All military members, from the most senior leaders to the newest recruits, must understand the critical importance of the cultural dimension and be trained to a standard commensurate with the proficiency required to operate a weapon system. Operation Iraqi

Freedom offers examples of cultural understanding failures at all levels of warfare. Strategically, the Bush Administration and US military planners failed to understand the feudalistic nature of the Iraqi society and tribal structure. The assumption was the Iraqi government would fill the vacuum created by the US military led regime change. What the US failed to realize was the tribe is the nucleus that Iraqi culture organizes their societal architecture around. Once the regime tumbled, party lines became tribal lines, which in turn created a tribal network that grew into an extremely deadly and costly insurgency.

Operationally, information operations, which have become an increasingly integral part of full-spectrum warfare, were ineffective for the US military primarily due to not understanding how Iraqi society disseminates and receives information. The American baseline for spreading information is the media. Therefore, the US military attempted to gain Iraqi public support by broadcasting information via local media sources. However, the Iraqi culture spreads information from person-to-person mostly via rumor in villages and discussion in the market place. Additionally, US forces were not allowed to interact with Iraqis or buy items on the local economy due to security concerns. Consequently, the US information operations campaign was severely handicapped due a fundamental cultural ignorance.

On the tactical level, cultural misunderstandings in Iraq have resulted in deadly confrontations. The Office of Naval Research interviewed a number of US Marines upon returning from Iraq. The Marines admitted they experienced great difficulty operating within the Iraqi culture and cited numerous instances where their lack of training and education had severe consequences. For example, Iraqis tend to use very animated hand

gestures, maneuver within one's peripheral vision, and require considerably less personal

space than Americans. These three relatively innocuous behaviors combined to pose a

serious threat to some US Marines. One Marine was quoted as saying, "We had to train

ourselves that this was not threatening. But we had our fingers on the trigger the whole

time because they were yelling." Another problem, particularly at roadblocks, was that

the American hand-signal for "stop" means "welcome" in Iraq; another fundamental

cultural misunderstanding that had deadly results (McFate 2005, 44).

Another cultural need emerging from the current operating environment is the

concept of treating cultural information in a manner similar to that of conventional

intelligence gathering. Commanders need to place the same intelligence priority on

learning how an adversary operates within society as he does on finding out where his

tanks are. Although the later may be of critical importance before crossing the line of

departure on a maneuver operation, the former will be invaluable across the full-spectrum

of operations; from planning combat operations to participating in stability and

reconstruction operations. This emerging need for a paradigm shift in intelligence

collection was noted by retired Admiral Cebrowski, Director of the Office of Force

Transformation in his February, 2004 address to the House Armed Services Committee.

According to Admiral Cebrowski:

> Thus, we see a change in our intelligence capabilities--the value of military
> intelligence is exceeded by that of social and cultural intelligence. We need the
> ability to look, understand, and operate deeply into the fault lines of societies
> where, increasingly, we find the frontiers of national security. Social and cultural
> intelligence allows us to do so. As a result, we acquire the ability to better identify
> and understand potential adversaries. This is an area where we will look for "big
> bets" -- high payoff technologies or concept/technology pairings that can not only
> alter our capabilities but alter the very character of military competition--in effect,
> creating a whole new game by rewriting the rules. (2004, 2)

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The admiral is not alone in calling for an increase in cultural training for the Armed Forces. Congressional leaders have also noticed the need for increased cultural training, and offered some specific areas that they feel need immediate attention.

The Honorable Ike Skelton and Honorable Jim Cooper, in their article "You're Not from Around Here, Are You," address what they see as a lack of professional competency on the part of the US military in regard to sophisticated knowledge of foreign countries. As sitting members of the House Armed Services Committee, Skelton and Cooper are quick to point out the military has performed admirably in Iraq and Afghanistan in the missions they have trained to accomplish. However, cultural awareness is not a standard mission-essential task that the military trains, although according to Skelton and Cooper, it should be.

The House Armed Services Committee conducted a hearing in 2003 to examine what, if any, critical lessons had been learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom. Major General Robert Scales, Jr., US Army (Retired), testified at the hearing. According to General Scales, there was a critical need for cultural awareness training among both civilian and military personnel. The General stated that had American planners been more proficient in the area of Iraqi culture, winning the peace following major combat operations would have been more successful. He contends senior planners and military commanders would have reached a different conclusion regarding the use of US military forces for an extended period of reconstruction operations had they been more aware of the cultural and societal norms of the Iraqi people.

In their article, Skelton and Cooper also define what they consider are specific needs of military cultural capabilities. They argue that all military members must receive

pre-deployment cultural awareness training, and that cultural training needs to become as common place in the military as tactics training. They further contend that cultural training needs extend beyond the foxhole, and commanders at all levels need to be held responsible for ensuring the proper command climate is established that fosters the development of cultural training and understanding. The training envisioned by Skelton and Cooper should occur at two levels.

First, flag and field grade officers need to receive training in cultural awareness at senior and intermediate professional education colleges. The same training needs to be offered to all officers as soon as practical within the capabilities of the current military education system. Skelton and Cooper cite the following excerpt from a report produced by general officers who served in Bosnia, Haiti, and Somalia in support of their assertion that all officers need to be trained in cultural studies:

> Great emphasis must be placed on geopolitical and cultural training for the Army's officer corps. Such training must begin at the officer basic course and continue at all levels of professional military education. Officers at all grades will benefit from such training because of the likelihood that they will be involved in peace operations on multiple occasions throughout their careers. (2004, 12-16)

Additionally, cultural training must be offered to Reserve components as well as active duty units.

Skelton and Cooper's second tier consists of language and area studies with the intent of training the military member to operate in the nations they are deploying to. In contrast to educating troops in cultural awareness, training involves learning an actual skill set that can be used throughout a soldier's career. Finally, cultural education and training efforts should focus on regions most likely to become future flash points and cultures critical to US national security objectives (2005, 14-16).

The necessity to increase cultural understanding throughout the US military has also received some attention from the Secretary of Defense. In a memorandum from Secretary Rumsfeld dated 8 October 2004, the Secretary directed the Under Secretary for Policy to "reshape the military's capabilities to exploit prewar opportunities and address postwar responsibilities at achieve US objectives in the transition to and from hostilities" (Rumsfeld 2004, 5). In turn, draft Department of Defense Directive 9-17-2004 charges the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to:

> 5.3.2. Reform curricula at senior service schools, service academies, ROTC programs, advanced officer and enlisted education programs to include foreign language education and regional area of expertise, in coordination with the Secretaries of the Military Departments and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
> 5.3.3. Expand opportunities for officer, enlisted and civilian personnel to participate in regional and cultural education programs, including resident or on-line studies and exchange programs. Establish programs to maintain proficiency in regional and cultural affairs and language skills. (DoD Directive 2004, 5)

Additionally, the directive states that cultural expertise and foreign language skills are essential enablers for increased capabilities. Also, US military forces must be reshaped in order to create the capability to operate within a wide range of cultures while responding to increasing more adaptive enemies (DoD Directive 2004, 6). Some senior US Marine leaders have embraced this concept of using cultural development as a force enabler for current and future battlefields.

Lieutenant General James Mattis, US Marine Corps, sees the need for his Marines to possess cultural capabilities in order to operate in what he refers to as hybrid wars. According to General Mattis, technology alone will not win the wars of the future. Future wars will follow the Four Block War model; a fire-fight on one block, humanitarian assistance on the next block, peace operations two blocks over, and psychological and

information operations being conducted on the fourth block. The General argues that Marines operating in this type of hybrid war will need the cultural awareness necessary to be successful in all four blocks. He also offers that the Corps is investing significant amounts of attention on getting their Marines the cultural training required for operating in these dynamic environments (2005, 29).

In summary, this section of the literature review focused on what the need is for cross-cultural capability development in US military members. The review began with examples of successes and failures from past conflicts that are attributable, at least in part, to a lack of US military cross-cultural capabilities demonstrated within a foreign culture. Next the review explored what the requested needs are for enhancing cultural capabilities. Finally, the review searched for specific capabilities desired when developing the ability for the military to operate in foreign cultures.

<u>Research Question Three</u>

The final section of this literature review will address research question three, which is: What are the existing US military cross-cultural capabilities? The review will include training venues, strengths, weaknesses, and identified areas for improvement. This author will begin with training venues.

The review of related literature has produced a plethora of information, briefings, guides, and cultural training products available to US military members. One portion of a US Army repository contained over 135 documents with information regarding cultural operations in Arab countries (Cultural 2006, 1). These documents included items such as field guides for Middle East operating areas, information about the religion of Islam, culture smart cards, basic "survival" language audio guides, historical information,

geographical information, negotiation tips, and a myriad of other information focused on acclimating soldiers to the various cultures of the region. However, the repository contained no information regarding who the central contact was for administration and maintenance of the information it contained, nor did it offer any guidance regarding how this information was being provided to individual members or units.

Another comprehensive collection of cultural information is provided and maintained by the US Air Force's Center for Regional and Cultural Studies, located at the Air War College in Montgomery Alabama. The Center was established in 2005 and focuses on education, research, and publications that support cultural studies, cross-cultural communication, and cultural awareness programs. Their mission is to support the Expeditionary Air Force by providing Airmen at all ranks with the best available understanding of foreign cultures and the competencies to communicate and collaborate effectively with members of foreign societies. The Center's primary focus is the enhancement of cross-cultural competencies within the US Air Force (Henk 2006, 3). The Center has volumes of information and research data designed to assist Air Force members in the area of cultural development.

The US Marines also have an impression collection of cultural products and information contained at the US Marine Corps' Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning. The Center's mission is to ensure Marines are equipped with operationally relevant regional, culture, and language knowledge to allow them to plan and operate successfully in the joint and combined expeditionary environment: in any region of the world, in current and potential operating conditions, targeting persistent and emerging threats and opportunities. The goal of the Center is to execute operationally focused

training and education in individual training, professional military education, and pre-deployment phases, reflecting current and likely contingencies and functions, to ensure Marines and leaders deploy a grasp of culture and indigenous dynamics for use as a force multiplier (USMC 2006, 1). While there appears to be no shortage of products to develop cross-cultural capabilities, the available literature did indicate a deficiency in the ability to synchronize information and efforts into a common system to be utilized by all military members.

Training inadequacies, according to cultural anthropologist Montgomery McFate, are the product of an inadequate system. McFate cites Andy Marshall, Director of the Office of Net Assessment, as commenting that future operations will require an "anthropology-level knowledge of a wide range of cultures." The problem, according to McFate, is the Department of Defense does not currently have the programs, systems, models, personnel, or organizations necessary to adequately prepare for the continuing and emerging threats presented by a myriad of unique operating environments. According to one Special Forces Colonel working for the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, "We literally don't know where to go for information on what makes other societies tick, so we use Google to make policy" (McFate 2005, 46). System inadequacies at the Department of Defense level translate into standardization and training issues at operational and tactical levels.

The spattering of cultural training programs that do exist are woefully under-funded and simply not large enough to train all military members in need. For example, pre-deployment cultural training is available at institutions such as the Naval Postgraduate School, the Army Intelligence Center, the Joint Readiness Training Center

and the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare School, but training tends to be superficial and too basic to adequately prepare military members for what they will actually face in theater. A majority of the training focuses on very fundamental language skills and basic behavioral information centered on how to stay out of trouble. Many troops in theater rely on personal reading and data gathering to compensate for the lack of formal training provided to them by the military.

Summary

This review of literature collected data in support of this project's primary research question: Can the US Military better develop the cross-cultural capabilities of its members? First, the review examined what the term cross-cultural capability means, and what it does not mean. Additionally, this section included the ingredients necessary to produce a cross-cultural capability and how cultural capabilities differ from cultural sensitivities and insensitivities. Next, section two of the explored cross-cultural capabilities in the context of military service, specifically within the United States military. This section of the review looked at past military successes and failures while focusing on how elements of culture contributed to the actions and inactions of military members. This section closed by looking for requested or desired needs for United States military members to be better equipped for cross-cultural challenges. Finally, section three of the review concentrated on existing military cross-cultural capabilities and what the current training venues consist of.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Overview

The research for this thesis began with a comprehensive review of the primary

research question, which is: Does the United States military need to better develop its

cross-cultural capabilities? A research methodology was followed to ensure the available

literature was researched and applied in a relevant and scholarly manner. The research

design consisted of two distinct stages--analysis and synthesis. The analysis portion of

the research design was used to break apart the research questions into individual areas of

study. Breaking each question down into individual study areas allowed the researcher to

decrease the aperture of the literature review lens and better concentrate on the specifics

of each question. Once all the research questions were analyzed to the appropriate level

of detail, the process moved on to the second stage--synthesis.

The synthesis stage reassembled the research questions using the data gathered in

the literature review. In addition to providing data to answer the questions of this study,

this portion of the research design sought to identify any noteworthy correlations,

contrasts and or similarities discovered during research, which proved relevant to the

study.

First Stage

The first stage analysis followed a very linear pattern of drilling down into each

research question in an effort to provide depth to the study. This stage conducted a

thorough analysis of the primary question by breaking it down into more focused

secondary questions. Secondary questions were then scrutinized to ensure they were researched to an appropriate level of understanding. The first secondary question analyzed dealt with the meaning of the term cross-cultural capability. The research quickly revealed many similar terms that have similar meanings, thereby reinforcing the researcher's earlier decision to use the term "cross-cultural capability" throughout this study.

Secondary question two sought to explore the need for cross-cultural capabilities by reviewing past military campaigns for successes and failures attributable to the area of cultural development. Question two was further broken down into three sub-questions that allowed for a more detailed and refined search of the literature. The literature revealed discernable trends from past campaigns that tied a variety of failures to culture related issues.

Finally, the third secondary question of the study was examined. Question three attempted to identify existing cross-cultural capabilities within the US military. Available sources were reviewed to collect data regarding cultural training venues presently providing training to military members, and what the strengths and weaknesses are of those active training venues. Research showed a number of active training venues within the component services, but also revealed a lack of standardization, access and synchronized effort among the services.

<u>Second Stage</u>

The second stage of the research design served to reassemble the data collected during the first stage into a workable product for final analysis in chapter 4 of this study. The detailed analysis and subsequent synthesis of data in chapter 4 represents a

comprehensive alchemy of the data collected to answer the study's research questions.

The second stage synthesis followed a less linear approach than the first stage, as this

stage moved laterally, vertically, and diagonally throughout the research questions in an

effort to find relational pivots among the collected research. The primary goal of this

stage was to explain how the data collected in chapter 2 related to the research questions

and why that data was important to this study. Metaphorically speaking, stage one of the

research design was a shaping operation that prepared the battlefield by reviewing the

available literature in chapter 2, and stage two was the main effort of analyzing and

synthesizing the collected data into products in chapter 4 (see figure 2), which were then

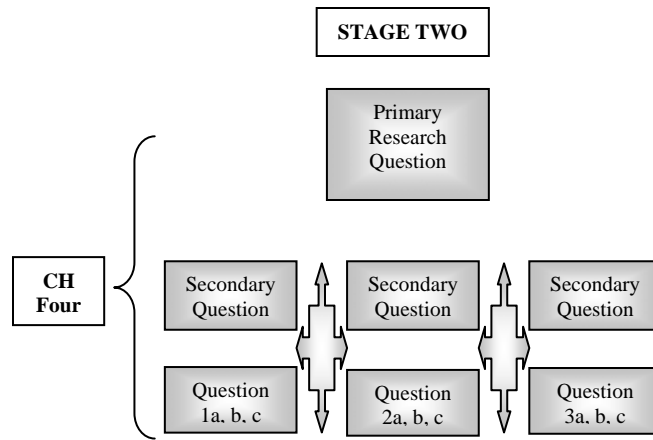used to form conclusions and recommendations in chapter 5.
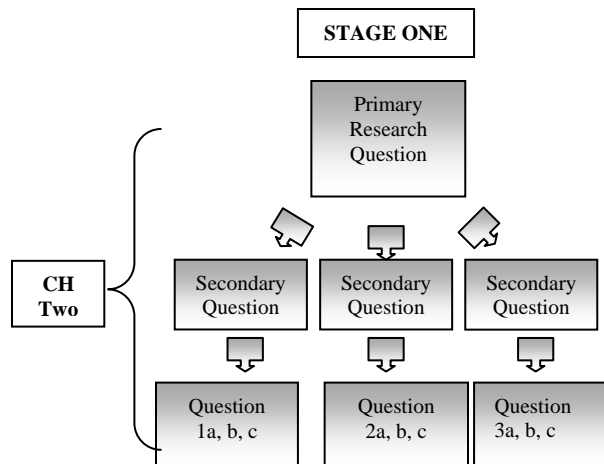
Figure 2.   Research Model Design

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

This chapter will serve to analyze and synthesize the data collected from the research conducted in chapter 2 of this project. The chapter structure follows the same format as chapter 2 in order to maintain continuity and consistent flow. The analysis will explore the data collected for each research question, beginning with research question one and proceeding in order through research question three.

Research Question One

Research question one sought to define what a cross-cultural capability is and what ingredients are necessary to produce a cross-cultural capability within a contextual military setting. In order to answer research question one, two secondary questions were researched to break down the primary question into more workable segments and collect relevant supporting data. Secondary question one focused on what a cross-cultural capability is. The first supporting question sought to define the term cross-cultural capability.

The available literature revealed a number of terms being used within the community of cultural research that were very similar to the term cross-cultural capability. Terms such as cross-cultural capability, cross-cultural skills, cross-cultural competence, cross-cultural awareness, inter-cultural studies, intercultural communication, intercultural effectiveness, intercultural awareness, and intercultural communicative competence are all being used to identify essentially the same set of skills (Killick 2005, 3). This lack of standardized terminology has contributed to confusion about what exactly

needs to be developed in military members in the context of cultural development. The concept of cultural development is not new to the military. However, agreeing upon a common lexicon of cultural terminology, curricula, and required capabilities has thus far escaped the training and education community. For example, the term cultural-sensitivity training is commonly used throughout the military to define mandatory training, usually conducted on an annual basis, which members must attend to meet a baseline training requirement. In reality, this training is designed to introduce soldiers to a variety of topics within the large range of applied cultural studies. By using the term "sensitivity training," many soldiers approach the training with the misperception that they are being trained to become sensitive to the behaviorisms and demands of other cultures. This is the wrong message.

The research discovered multiple sources who are calling for the development of cultural capabilities, not sensitivities, among the US military. The 2004 Defense Science Board called for the military to treat the development of cultural skills the same as they treat the development of combat skills. It is therefore necessary for the military to focus on developing cross-cultural capabilities, which is vastly different from simply educating members on the topic of culture.

As the research showed in chapter 2, the term cross-cultural capability applies to human behavior on multiple dimensions. In addition to addressing how individuals act and react to foreign cultures, it also includes how well individuals understand and accept their own culture. Killick defines cross-cultural capability as follows:

> In order to be capable of responding appropriately to encounters with other
> cultures, whether those cultures are nationality-based, religion-based, gender-
> based, socio-economically based, or based in any other of the multiple areas of

human existence which meld our understandings, beliefs, values, and behaviours, it is necessary to acquire knowledge, understanding, awareness, and a willingness, or even a will, to reflect upon one's own position in relation to the other. (1999, 3)

This definition is a great example of how diverse and dynamic the study of culture becomes when the focus of the study lies in creating a capability to operate within a foreign society. Killick's definition presents three key points that are crucial to developing cultural capabilities.

First, the definition is action based. The first line states the need for the individual (or organization) to be capable of responding appropriately to cultural encounters. This involves much more than a rudimentary understanding of how a culture operates. The ability to respond requires not only an understanding of a specific culture, it also requires an achieved, practical skill-level sufficient to be an active participant within a foreign society. This level of interaction requires a greater development of breadth and depth within the context of a specific culture.

Second, Killick's definition takes culture beyond the fundamentals of language and geography to the many different and distinct layers that make a culture unique. Being culturally capable involves understanding a foreign culture across the multiple dimensions of that culture's societal practices. Societal elements such as religion, gender, age, nationality, social classes, and ethnicity must be understood in order to develop a true understanding of the culture and a corresponding ability to operate within that culture.

Third, Killick introduces the concept of needing to understand one's own culture, and position within that culture, as an enabler to becoming culturally capable in a foreign culture. This is a critical point that is often times overlooked by individuals and

organizations seeking to operate within different cultures. Military members must understand why they believe and act in the ways they do before they can begin to understand the intricacies of a foreign culture. Soldiers introduced to a foreign culture will immediately begin to process local behaviors through the lens of what they consider to be "normal." This is a potential flash point for cultural clashes, especially if the "new" culture the soldier is exposed to is very different from American culture. As table 1 in chapter 2 illustrated, many world cultures are fundamentally different from American culture. According to Killick's definition of cross-cultural capability, this presents the potential for problems on two fronts. First, understanding the new culture and second, understanding one's own culture. Which leads to the second supporting question of secondary question one, which is; What ingredients are required to produce a cross-cultural capability?

The analysis of literature has revealed three primary elements that must be present to create a cross-cultural capability. First, the understanding that cultures exist in both individual and organizational belief sets. Military members must understand they could be operating within multiple cultures simultaneously, and the better they understand the dynamics of each culture the better their chances are of accomplishing their assigned mission. For example, a soldier deployed to the Middle East is exposed to multiple cultures within the assigned area of operations. The most obvious cultural challenges are those of the Host Nations. However, in addition to the complexities of the Host Nation cultures, the soldier is operating within a number of other organizational cultures. The soldier's unit has its own culture, his component service has its own culture, the joint forces and coalitions in the area of operations have their own cultures, and the non-

governmental organizations have their own culture. When viewed in the setting of organizational constructs the concept of culture takes on a new dimension of complexity. And although possessing a working knowledge of relevant organizational cultures is helpful to individual cultural development, developing a cross-cultural capability does not require a thorough understanding of all the organizational cultures one is exposed to. It does require that individuals understand organizational cultures do exist, and that those cultures can greatly influence the behavior and beliefs of the individuals who are a part of them.

The second element required for developing a cultural capability is understanding one's own cultural beliefs, and how those beliefs factor into understanding and operating within foreign cultures. According to Joel Leyden, owner of a communications company that specializes in cross-cultural business training, "We don't see things as they are . . . we see things as we are" (2005, 2). Leyden uses the cultures of America and Israel to illustrate how differences in culture can be viewed as individual shortcomings. For example, Israelis are often viewed by American businessmen as arrogant, aggressive, and pushy. Conversely, Americans are viewed by Israeli businessmen as artificial, phony, and weak (2005, 4). While neither of these generalizations is true, attempting to conduct business with a foundational, cultural misunderstanding such as this is a prelude to disaster. What the Israelis view as weakness is actually an element of American business that places value in being polite and respectful when conducting business negotiations. What the Americans perceive as arrogant and rude is nothing more than Israeli directness and honesty, which are valued highly within the Israeli culture. This cultural disparity illustrates the importance of knowing one's own cultural belief system before attempting

to understand another. For instance, in the previous example, knowing that Israeli custom tends to cast a perception of arrogance to the culturally unaware American is only half the equation. The other half comes from knowing how American customs are perceived by Israelis. This is a critical point. True cross-cultural capabilities are developed by blending existing cultural beliefs into a foreign culture without judgment. When viewed through a lens of common understanding, no culture is right or wrong; simply different.

The third and final primary element needed to develop a cross-cultural capability is knowledge of the cultures that exist in the assigned area of operations. This is the element that most individuals and organizations focus their attention on when preparing to deploy to a foreign area. However, typical preparation efforts can fall short for a number of fairly common reasons. First, preparing for this element exclusively is insufficient. Focused study of a foreign culture cannot occur in the vacuum of that culture, and although extensive study is an essential step to developing cross-cultural capability, it must be synchronized with the study of one's own culture and extended to include organizations in addition to individuals. Second, cultural preparation must include all cultures within a specified region of interest. Much attention is paid to studying societal customs and culture, but attention must also be paid to the cultures of governments, religions, tribes, economies, organizations, militaries, and regional relations. Lastly, cultural preparation efforts should be created and instructed by individuals who have been trained in cultural development and understand the complexities of developing cultural capabilities. Additionally, cultural preparation should be standardized for all trainees and made available to every member deploying to a foreign region.

Research Question Two

The next area of analysis focused on research question two, which sought to determine if there is a need for cross-cultural capability development in the US military. The research began by examining supporting question one: What were past military successes and failures attributable to the area of culture. Research into the history of US military encounters with foreign cultures began, ironically enough, in the United States with a look at the 19th Century Indian Wars.

Historians have long viewed Indian removal as one of the most shameful episodes in American history. The 1836 Treaty of Echota played a major role in the Indian removal process and resulted in the permanent displacement of 18,000 Cherokee men, women, and children by order of the United States Government. The treaty did little to respect the dignity of the Cherokee people and was enforced in a manner that was often times cruel and inhumane. The culture that existed in the US government and military in 1836 viewed Indians as subhuman savages who were undeserving of fair treatment. From the lowest foot soldier to the President himself, 19th Century American culture allowed atrocities to be committed when dealing with the growing Indian "problem."

The Treaty of Echota was President Andrew Jackson's coup de grace to decades devoted to Indian removal. Nearly 46,000 Indians were relocated during Jackson's presidency. Why was Jackson so apathetically dedicated to the removal of Indians? From the time that he was a small boy growing up in South Carolina, Andrew Jackson had lost friends and relatives to the Indian War. His mother was described by neighbors as being a passionate hater of the Indians. Public opinion in the early 19th Century favored Indian removal and cared little about how it was achieved, as long as it was achieved

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expeditiously. Predictably, by the time Jackson was a teenager he shared the opinion of those surrounding him and joined in the effort to remove Indians and claim land in the name of "whites" (Remini 2001, 9). In his annual message of 1830, Jackson was quoted as saying:

> True philanthropy reconciles the mind to these vicissitudes as it does to the extinction of one generation to make room for another . . . philanthropy could not wish to see this continent restored to the condition in which it was found by our forefathers. (Remini 2001, 9)

Jackson undoubtedly believed that he was acting in the best interests of national security by containing the Indian population to an area where they could be controlled. He also believed the relocated Indians would welcome the opportunity to become part of white civilization and eagerly embrace the customs and culture of white America. Jackson's attitude and behavior toward the Indians clearly illustrates a lack of cultural understanding across the three primary elements previously stated as being necessary to developing a cultural capability.

First, Jackson failed to understand the importance of tribal (organizational) pride and allegiance within the Indian Nation, and therefore incorrectly assumed the Indians would welcome the chance to become "civilized." Second, he lacked understanding of his own cultural biases toward Indians and allowed public opinion to fuel his already biased views. Had Jackson not viewed Indians as savages who were destined to become extinct, he would have been less indifferent to the cruel manner in which his government was treating them. Third, Jackson did not understand the culture of the Indian nor did he take time to understand their position. Although he was in a difficult position, he was also working from a position of advantage, and could have negotiated favorable agreements

with dignity had he taken the time to understand the culture of his foe. Fifty years later, American culture would again impact the actions of those serving in the US military.

America's involvement in the First World War resulted in the mobilization of the entire nation. American society rallied around the American serviceman singing songs of glory and promising a convincing victory. The most popular song of the time, Over There, sent American servicemen into battle in the name of family and national pride. The message was clear--the Yanks are coming and will take care of everything. This attitude was also resident in the training being received by American troops. The tactics, techniques, and procedures being taught to American servicemen were viewed as the best available anywhere and therefore were to be followed without question or hesitation. This reluctance to adjust procedures would prove costly in the European theater.

The French and British Armies had already suffered millions of casualties by the time American servicemen arrived in theater. The machine gun was inflicting heavy casualties and dictating an immediate need for a change in tactics. Although the Americans had seen the use of first generation machine guns during the American Civil War, the crude weapons and tactics used in the 1860s paled in comparison to what was being faced in the European theater during World War I. And, although the Americans were being warned by the French and British to abandon their standard military tactic of the infantry charge, they continued to move across open fields of fire. One French soldier was quoted as saying:

> The Americans, despite the evidence available to them of what the machine gun could do to offensive troops, insisted, when they took to the battlefield themselves, on trying to fight the kind of war motion – open movement across fields of fire--that they had been trained for. The results were tragic. (Kennedy 2006, 5)

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This is not to suggest that a song was responsible for causing American casualties. Rather this example is used to illustrate the power of culture in shaping the actions of society, government, and individuals. The type of bravado sung about in the song Over There was indicative of the American military culture during World War I, and helped fuel the cavalier behavior that would disregard the advice of seasoned war veterans in the middle of a bloody campaign. The US military would continue to face cultural challenges throughout both World Wars, and although some lessons were learned, some of the same cultural challenges would again be faced when hostilities quickly mounted in Korea during 1950 to 1953.

The Korean War, or what President Truman referred to as a Police Action, would involve twenty-two nations over the three-year period it was fought. However, because of the speed in which events developed and occurred, the US had very little time to prepare troops for the operating environment they would encounter. The combination of events and conditions would merge to pave a road to war that placed US troops 8,000 miles from home, without any cultural training, to join forces with 22 other foreign nations for a combined fight against a hardened, determined enemy. Predictably, a host of organizational and cultural problems plagued the coalition forces and ultimately decreased combat effectiveness.

Individually, problems typically arose due to common misunderstandings among soldiers from nations with cultures vastly different than America. Many of these problems could have been avoided, or at least minimized, had the individuals involved had a better understanding of the different cultures they were experiencing. What some American soldiers perceived as individual acts of arrogance and stubbornness by some of

the United Nations' forces, was in fact foreign soldiers behaving in a manner that was appropriate in their own culture. For example, some American officers were removed from theater for turning a hygiene problem with the Ethiopian soldiers into an incident serious enough to warrant commander involvement from both nations. This type of incident accentuates the need for cultural capability at all levels within the military organization. Had the US officers understood the differences that exist between acceptable levels of hygiene within the American and Ethiopian cultures, they would have been better equipped to work a solution to the problem within the cultural constraints they were operating in. Instead, cultural ignorance combined with personality differences to fuel a display of intolerance that was ultimately seen as detrimental to unit effectiveness, and resulted in US officers being fired. In addition to individual cultural differences, difficulties were also experienced within many organizations in the Korean theater.

Perhaps the biggest cultural problem US military planners faced in Korea was that of language and liaison. Although English was supposed to be the basic language of the United Nations forces in Korea, US military leaders frequently found themselves needing to communicate with coalition leaders who did not understand English. In fact, many languages, such as Korean, Greek, Turkish, Siamese, French, Flemish, Spanish, Italian, Amharic, and Dutch, in addition to a variety of native dialects, were competing with English to become the common language used for communications. US leaders even faced communications difficulties with British commanders, effectively rediscovering what had been learned in the previous World Wars--even forces that share a common root language experience difficulty communicating in dynamic environments. However, this

did not stop all orders and directives from being broadcast in English from Higher Headquarters to all coalition forces, placing the burden of translation on the shoulders of collation units. Many coalition forces were simply unable to translate English into their native language, which created considerable confusion and disunion of effort among the coalition. The US attempted to mitigate some sources of confusion by developing liaison personnel during the war, but the problem proved too large for a spontaneous solution, and language and liaison problems continued throughout the remainder of the war (Cooling 1983, 40).

Both the organizational and individual cultural problems experienced during the Korean War could have been mitigated had cultural training been used to prepare US troops for the Korean theater. Individually, cultural training for deploying soldiers would have equipped them to better understand their own culture, and how their culture would prove to be very different than the many cultures they would experience as part of a coalition force in a foreign land. Organizationally, language and communications difficulties experienced during the previous Word Wars should have led to US planners understanding the dynamics involved when working with coalition forces. Entering the Korean conflict with liaison officers trained in the cultures and languages of the coalition forces would have greatly increased US effectiveness and negated the need to pull officers from assigned missions in an attempt to mitigate communication problems while the war was already under way. Inability to understand and accurately assess cultural dynamics would again be a problem for the US military in the Highlands of Central Vietnam.

The literature review explored the actions of American civic action teams during the Vietnam War. These teams proved how successful US soldiers can be when they understand the culture of the indigenous people and work toward building common understanding of cultures and missions. However, although the US soldiers involved with the civic action teams managed to build intercultural understanding and trust among the people of the Highlands, their work ultimately resulted in failure because of strategic US military cultural planning deficiencies.

US military planners involved with the civic action team concept did not understand the complexities of the Vietnamese culture and ethnic alignments. Accordingly, cultural, and ethnic differences that had existed for centuries between the Vietnamese people and the Montagards of the Central Highlands were not factored into the planning for the mission of the civic action teams. This lack of cultural understanding resulted in the US military conducting tactical level operations that proved to be contrary to the strategic mission of the US and Vietnamese governments.

The Central Highlands failure highlights two important areas of cultural training and capability. First, US soldiers can effectively operate within foreign cultures if they are provided proper training and allowed the flexibility to adjust as required to fit within their assigned operating environment. The personnel initially assigned to the civic action teams were not trained to interact with the civilian population and consequently were not successful in achieving their objective. However, once replaced by trained individuals, civic action team personnel managed to earn the population's trust and gather relevant intelligence.

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Second, cultural capabilities need to exist across the full-spectrum of warfare to keep objectives synchronized on common mission accomplishment. As the Highlands case illustrated, even the best tactical execution of a plan can not compensate for failures in planning at the strategic and operational levels. The failure of military planners to understand the cultures present in the Highlands area of operations resulted in tactical successes turning into failures, and relationships being strained between the US and Vietnamese people. Currently, the US finds itself embroiled again in a cultural crucible of misunderstandings and misguided actions.

Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom are challenging US military forces to effectively operate in a cultural minefield. The nonlinear, noncontiguous battle spaces of Iraq and Afghanistan require US soldiers to personally interact regularly with indigenous populations. However, incidents occurring in theater involving US troops indicate a continuing lack of cross-cultural capabilities.

The literature review outlined the incident involving the burning of Afghan fighters by American soldiers. The ensuing investigation resulted in reprimanding four US soldiers and determined the soldiers involved were unaware that cremation is forbidden in Islamic culture. The team also acknowledged the burning was wrong and ordered training on Afghan sensitivities for all troops in the command. These soldiers lacked the ability to effectively operate within the Afghan culture, and the corrective actions taken may create resentment instead of heighten awareness. By determining the soldiers were unaware Islamic culture condemned their actions, the investigation team effectively vindicated the soldiers of culpability for their actions, but the soldiers were reprimanded anyway. Additionally, the soldiers' actions led to the entire command

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requiring "Afghan sensitivity" training. Mandatory Afghan sensitivity training in the area of operations where Afghan fighters are trying to kill Americans does not have a high probability of success. The failure in this case was sending the soldiers into the area without the training necessary to develop cross-cultural capabilities.

The US military is also facing cultural challenges in Iraq. The literature review cited examples of US soldiers using standard security force tactics, techniques, and procedures to detain Iraqi civilians suspected of wrong doing. While the American soldiers are only doing what they have been trained to do, the standard US military procedures being used are viewed by Iraqis as dishonorable and offensive within the setting of Iraqi customs, culture, and accepted societal norms. Without risking the safety of US soldiers operating in the Iraqi theater, a review of procedures through a cultural lens would be beneficial to determine if procedural modifications could be made to achieve the mission with less cultural conflict. Ideally, cultural considerations for the area of interest should be researched, accounted for and trained to soldiers prior to their deploying to the theater of operations. Which leads to the final support questions of research question two: What are the requested needs for cultural capabilities and what specific capabilities are desired?

The literature review uncovered a variety sources expressing the need for a greater cultural capability throughout the US military and Department of Defense. Cultural Anthropologist, Montgomery McFate, believes the problem has become so alarming that it requires a federal initiative to correct the growing problem within the Defense Department. Advocates for cultural training such as McFate consider the current state of deficient cultural capabilities within the US military a national security concern.

Operation Iraqi Freedom is a stark reminder of how cultural conditions can create serious security problems for forces unprepared to operate in a country where they do not understand the cultural setting.

The research cited examples of Marines returning from Iraq who retrained themselves in theater to recognize certain Iraqi actions as nonthreatening. Additionally, commanders returning from Iraq were frustrated with their lack of cultural awareness and understanding of the Iraqi operating environment. They also expressed concern over their units being placed at risk due to receiving intelligence that proved to be irrelevant to the enemy situation. Intelligence collection failed to adjust to the unconventional fight at hand and offered data on baseline threats instead of the local threats being encountered by US soldiers on the ground. This problem with intelligence collection has also become a concern among key Congressional leaders.

The Director of the Office of Force Transformation, retired Admiral Cebrowski, told the House Armed Services Committee, "The value of military intelligence is exceeded by that of social and cultural intelligence," during his February 2004 address (2004, 2). The Admiral believes a paradigm shift is needed in the intelligence community to make understanding how the enemy's society works as high a collection priority as locating his tanks. Congressmen Skelton and Cooper share the Admiral's concern about shifting toward a better understanding of an adversary's culture and societal composition.

House Armed Services Committee members Skelton and Cooper have expressed the need for increased cultural training and development in the US military since 2003. They believe cultural training needs to become a mission essential task and a more important element of military training. They propose a two-tier system to meet the

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training needs at all level of military service. First, senior and field grade officers should receive comprehensive cultural training as part of their senior and intermediate professional education curriculum. Second, all military members should receive pre-deployment cultural training in the same manner they receive tactics training. Pre-deployment training should focus on specific language and area studies of the region being deployed to. The Secretary of Defense agrees with Congressmen Skelton and Cooper on the need for cultural training within the military.

Secretary Rumsfeld has directed senior leaders within the Defense Department to reform curricula within service schools, service academies, ROTC programs, and advanced officer and enlisted education programs to include language and regional studies education. Further, the Secretary has called for the expansion of opportunities for all Department of Defense personnel to participate in regional and cultural studies, with additional programs in place to maintain proficiency once cultural skill sets are achieved. Mr. Rumsfeld believes US military forces must be reshaped to create the capabilities necessary to operate within a wide range of cultures while engaging enemies in increasingly unconventional battle spaces (DoD Directive 2004, 6).

<center>Research Question Three</center>

The final portion of the literature review focused on research question three: What are the existing US military cross-cultural capabilities? The research explored existing training venues to identify strengths, weaknesses, and any areas needing improvement. The review of available literature revealed a myriad of cultural training products across all service components. The majority of training aids reviewed were very informative and included data in areas such as world religions, culture smart cards, basic language guides,

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geographical information, historical data, and so on. Overall, a great deal of information and a variety of training formats, but no effort to coordinate the training across all services or formalize a common venue to train all service members.

For example, in 2005, the US Air Force created the Center for Regional and Cultural Studies at the Air War College in Montgomery Alabama. The Center's primary focus is the enhancement of cross-cultural competencies within the US Air Force. The Center is staffed by experts in the field of culture and has accumulated volumes of culturally relevant information to assist Air Force members in developing cultural capabilities. However, two deficiencies, which the research has identified as a trend among US military cultural training efforts, are present at the Center.

First, no formal program has been established to ensure all members of the Air Force benefit from the assets available at the Center. This is contrary to the Secretary of Defense's vision of all military members becoming culturally capable via formal training programs established throughout the Department of Defense. Further, the current state of operations within the military has created an increasingly accelerated tempo for all service members. Accordingly, most members do not have the flexibility to adjust their current battle rhythm to seek out training that is not mandatory. Typically, the training will not take place if it is not required. The problems arise once military members arrive in theater and quickly realize they lack the ability to effectively operate within the culture surrounding them. The training needs to be formalized and mandatory for all members.

Second, the Center does not integrate with the other services or the Department of Defense. This deficiency is not exclusive to the Air Force. The US Marine Corps also have an institute for cultural development called the Center for Advanced Operational

Culture Learning. Similar to the Air Force's internal training focus, the Marine Center focuses on training Marines in relevant cultural studies. Both services have built impressive institutes of cultural studies at the tactical level, but neither have taken steps to formalize training within their respective services or synchronize their efforts with sister services. These inadequacies illustrate the need to improve cultural training within the US military by reforming training efforts at the strategic and operational levels of planning.

Cultural expert Montgomery McFate traces the existing inadequacies of cultural training within the US military to a lack of formal programs designed to adequately prepare for current and emerging threats (2005, 46). This assertion is supported by the data collected, which found a wide range of cultural training products scattered among the different services, but no mechanism in place to centralize efforts toward a program designed to standardize training among all service members.

Additionally, although a large number of training products currently exist, the research showed that many military members at all levels are seeking the cultural information they need on their own. For example, after arriving in theater, many troops rely on personal reading and data collection to compensate for their lack of cultural capability. Another example is the Special Forces Colonel, working for the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, who uses Google to make policy because he does not know where else to collect data on the cultural composition of societies relevant to US military concerns. These examples illustrate that the abundance of cultural data residing in various repositories throughout the US military is not accessible enough to the members who require the information to accomplish assigned missions.

Summary

        This chapter performed an analysis of data collected during the literature review. The analysis followed the research methodology outlined in chapter 3, and proceeded sequentially through the project's three research questions in an effort to answer the primary research question: Can the US military better develop the cross-cultural capabilities of its members?

        First, secondary question one was answered by defining what a cross-cultural capability is and what ingredients are necessary to produce the desired capability. Next, secondary question two was addressed with a historical analysis of past military conflicts where culture played a role in the failures and successes of the US military. Specific capabilities needed for cultural proficiency were also identified. Last, existing US military cultural capabilities were analyzed for strengths, weaknesses, and areas needing improvement.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter will present the conclusions and recommendations resulting from the previous chapters of this research project. All conclusions and recommendations were derived from the data collected and analyzed as part of this study, and will therefore remain grounded in the supporting data of the previous chapters.

Thesis Question

As a reminder, the primary research question of this thesis is: Does the US military need to better develop the cross-cultural capabilities of its members?

Conclusions

This project illustrated the complexities and intricacies involved with the study of culture. Understanding how culture influences the many dimensions of society has become increasingly more important as military actions continue to expand outside the margins of symmetrical warfare. The US military has begun to recognize the critical role culture plays in conducting operations, but has not yet established an adequate system to produce force-wide capabilities. Therefore, to answer the primary research question, this study concludes the US military does need to better develop the cross-cultural capabilities of its members. The following three conclusions are presented in support of the primary finding.

1. Cultural training must first focus on developing cultural capabilities instead of simply broadcasting cultural information. Training needs to be designed and tailored to meet the desired end state, which is practical application by deployed military members. To achieve this end state, training needs to address three overlapping areas.

First, the capability to function cross-culturally begins by understanding one's own cultural background, and how that background serves as a filter to influence one's perceptions of foreign cultures. Therefore, the foundation for any cross-cultural training must begin by exploring American culture, and how perceptions and behaviors that are acceptable in the US may be unacceptable and offensive in other parts of the world. In addition to American culture, military members need to understand how the culture within the US military not only shapes their behavior, but how it is perceived by other nations.

Second, cultural training must emphasize that cultures exist within organizations as well as individuals. As the research showed, the modern battlefield has expanded to include urban areas in what has come to be known as the four-block war. US soldiers have increasingly found themselves interacting with indigenous populations on a daily basis. As the military continues to conduct operations in urban areas, members need to understand that different cultures may exist within a single culture. Organizations such as hospitals, schools, religious institutions, local governments, tribal sects, and militaries often times harbor cultures of their own, and therefore posses their own unique perspective.

Third, cultural training must be specific and relevant to the region where operations are being conducted. The first two areas above build a foundation of cultural

understanding that can be applied in virtually any cultural setting. This last area of emphasis focuses on training individuals to operate within the specific region they are deploying to. In addition to training cataloged data regarding the region, training should include timely and relevant updates from individuals and units with recent experience in the region.

2. There is need for cross-cultural capabilities across all levels of the US military. The literature showed US military cultural shortcomings in every conflict studied. Further, soldiers and scholars alike have been calling for an increase in cultural capabilities and awareness for decades. Recently, the Secretary of Defense and congressional leaders have also publicly called for the military to increase the cultural capability of its members. But the most convincing cries for increased capabilities are those coming from military members returning from the battlefield. Strategic planners are collecting cultural data using Google, commanders are receiving intelligence packaged for Cold War enemy threat postures, and soldiers are training themselves in theater to operate within the culture of their adversary.

3. Existing venues for cultural training within the US military are insufficient to adequately produce cross-cultural capabilities in all military members. The institutes within the military that do provide cultural training are strictly service-specific and do not provide force-wide training venues. The training programs were developed in the vacuum of the respective parent service and have not been synchronized within the Department of Defense or other service branches.

<u>Recommendations</u>

The development of cross-cultural capabilities within all members of the US military will take time. However, the need for these capabilities has never been greater and will only continue to grow in the future. Based on the conclusions listed above, the following recommendations are offered as possible solutions to the current performance deficiencies noted.

1. Someone needs to be in charge. Currently, the services are doing an admirable job of trying to train their members in cultural studies. However, multiple services accomplishing similar tasks typically results in multiple redundancies and deficiencies. Additionally, all levels of the military are currently experiencing deficiencies in culturally trained personnel, so a baseline of qualified personnel needs to be established before training requirements can be levied to subordinate units. Therefore, it is recommended that a Task Force be created under the Office of Secretary of Defense to develop, implement, and provide oversight of all US military cultural-capability training. It is further recommended that a highly qualified civilian expert in the field of cultural studies be assigned to lead the Task Force. This will help accomplish two things. First, the Task Force will be dedicated exclusively to the task of cultural development training and therefore be less susceptible to peripheral distractions. Second, civilian oversight is more inclined to seek out cultural experts from a variety of sources, thereby mitigating the parochial tendency of the services to remain within the comfort zone of their own branch.

2. Senior US military leaders must provide enthusiastic sponsorship of the Task Force efforts. Specifically, the Joint Chiefs, should be named as the office of primary responsibility for their respective services and fully cooperate with the efforts and

directives of the established Task Force. Subordinate commanders must be held accountable to directives issued by the Task Force.

3. Resources follow priorities, especially in the military. It is essential that the Task Force receive ample funding and resources to accomplish the assigned task. As suggested by leading experts in the literature review, it is recommended that training to develop cultural capabilities be treated as a mission essential task. Declaring cultural training a mission essential task will both validate its importance and assure units allocate the resources necessary to accomplish the training.

Summary

Cultural training is needed at all levels of military service. From the senior officer orchestrating strategy to the junior soldier with boots on the ground, culturally capable personnel must be present across the full-spectrum of military operations. This study determined the US military needs to better develop the cross-cultural capabilities of its members, and recommended a Task Force be created to lead and unify efforts aimed at training all military members to become culturally capable.

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